



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Advisory Circular

Subject:

CARRY-ON BAGGAGE

Date:

6/25/98

AC No: 121-29A

Initiated by:

AFS-200

Change:

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) provides information to the public, certificated air carriers, commercial operators, and airline personnel about Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved carry-on baggage programs. It updates, provides clarification, and additional information on how to comply with the carry-on baggage regulations.

2. CANCELLATION. AC 121-29, Carry-On Baggage, dated November 2, 1987, is canceled.

3. RELATED 14 CFR SECTIONS. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 23, § 23.787(e); part 25, §§ 25.787, 25.789; part 121, §§ 121.285, 121.585, 121.589; and part 135, § 135.87.

4. BACKGROUND. Certificated air carriers, airline personnel, and the public have asked the FAA to clarify existing policy found in AC 121-29, §§ 121.589 and 135.87, and in model carry-on baggage programs. The FAA agrees that additional policy guidance is needed because of changes in the airline passenger's traveling habits, such as the introduction of wheeled luggage. In addition, because the hub/spoke concept has made connection times shorter, passengers are not guaranteed that their checked baggage will make a connecting flight. Therefore, many passengers find it more desirable to carry on their own baggage.

5. DISCUSSION. An operator's FAA-approved carry-on baggage program should encompass the areas discussed in the following paragraphs.

a. Compliance with Existing Regulations. The operator's approved carry-on baggage program should ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. An operator's approved program will not authorize any deviation from applicable requirements contained in 14 CFR Chapter I (parts 1 thru 199).

b. Description of Carry-On Baggage. The operator's program should include a description of carry-on baggage that discusses the items in the following subparagraphs. The operator's

program should include guidance regarding items that are considered carry-on baggage and must be properly stowed. Some operators may want to consider anything carried into the cabin of an aircraft by a passenger to be carry-on baggage. However, the FAA does not consider approved child restraint devices that are properly used during flight as carry-on baggage.

(1) Size and Amount of Carry-On Baggage. The operator's program should provide information about the acceptable size of carry-on baggage. For example, some operators could have carry-on baggage programs that limit the size of each carry-on to 45 linear inches or 51 linear inches with the handles and wheels. However, a size limit should only be used if it is necessary to ensure proper stowage of carry-on baggage. In addition, the program should also provide information regarding the number of bags that are permitted per passenger, e.g., a limit of two bags per passenger. For example, an operator's program could stipulate that passengers could carry on one bag with dimensions that do not exceed 45 linear inches (51 linear inches with wheels and handles) and a second bag that does not exceed one-half of the linear inches of the first bag. Another possibility would be a two-bag limit, and stipulate that neither bag can exceed a certain linear inch limit.

(2) Weight Assessment of Carry-On Baggage. Questions regarding weight and balance are addressed in other FAA guidance material. However, it should be noted that weight and balance assessments are one factor in the carry-on baggage program. The operator's carry-on baggage program must be designed to ensure that the approved weight and balance program is not compromised.

(3) Child Restraint Devices. The operator's program should include a discussion of child restraint devices and how they will be handled as part of the air carrier's carry-on baggage program. Child restraint devices that are not used during the flight are to be stowed either as carry-on baggage or as checked baggage.

c. Proper Stowage of Carry-On Baggage. Each operator's approved carry-on baggage program should contain information about the proper stowage of carry-on baggage and cargo in the cabin, including the following:

(1) Procedures for Proper Stowage. Depending upon the aircraft being used, the cabin configuration and other factors, the FAA could approve a carry-on baggage program that ensures that each piece of baggage fits under the seat in front of the passenger such that no part of the bag protrudes beyond the fully upright seat back or causes obstruction to passenger movement to, from, or across the aisle. Depending upon the aircraft being used, the cabin configuration, and other factors, the approval for carry-on baggage programs for proper stowage of items in overhead bins could be issued if the program ensures that baggage fits securely in the overhead compartment and the bin doors close without any forced effort. Additionally, approval for a carry-on baggage program could be issued if the program is designed to minimize or eliminate the chances of baggage and other articles falling out when the bin doors are opened.

(2) Procedures for the Proper Stowage of Carry-On Baggage, Cargo, and Unusual Items in the Cabin. The operator's carry-on baggage program should provide information regarding the procedures for proper stowage of carry-on baggage and cargo in the cabin, as follows:

(a) Procedures to ensure that all carry-on baggage is stowed in an approved compartment or other specifically approved area.

(b) Methods to ensure carry-on baggage and cargo do not exceed the placarded weight limitations or certificated load limits for the stowage areas, where they are stowed, or the restraints used to secure them. This should emphasize that overhead bin weight limits cannot be exceeded and that the bins should be easily closed.

(c) A list of specific items that can be carried in the cabin but outside of specified carry-on baggage compartments. Items that an operator might wish to carry in the cabin outside of approved stowage areas should be extremely limited and should be listed in the operator's approved carry-on baggage program. The procedures for the stowage of these unusual articles should specify locations where these items can be stowed and the proper method for restraining them. The restraints used should ensure that the article will not shift under emergency load conditions specified for the same or similar restraint or equipment approved by the FAA for use by the operator in the same aircraft. To ensure that articles do not shift under the specified load conditions, an approved weight limitation for each restraint or "tie-down" area is necessary. For example, a valuable violin, if listed in the operator's carry-on baggage program, could be such a specific item, provided that the instrument is properly strapped to an approved and designated seat.

(d) **Procedures for Stowage of Unusual Articles.** Passengers may want to carry large or fragile objects that need special stowage. Operators may not want to check these fragile items. However, many times it is difficult to find a place to stow these items in the cabin. The best solution is for passengers to ensure fragile objects are securely packed to withstand normal handling. If an item cannot be checked or stowed in a manner that ensures the safety of the aircraft and its occupants, or if the passenger believes that the item cannot be packaged to withstand normal handling, then the item will have to be shipped by some other means.

(3) Assurance that Carry-On Baggage does not Interfere with Emergency Equipment. The operator's program must ensure that no item is stowed in any manner that may interfere with direct and easy access to, and use of, emergency equipment. The FAA recommends that operators designate a required crewmember position the responsibility for ensuring that emergency equipment access is unrestricted.

(a) Stowage of canes or other assist devices in accordance with existing regulations and in approved areas, such as under a seat, approved cargo bins, or fitted holders, if appropriate, along the fuselage wall.

(b) Verification of Proper Stowage. Procedures for verifying that each article of baggage is properly stowed before all the passenger entry doors are closed should be addressed in carry-on baggage programs. The FAA recommends that operators give this assignment to a specific crewmember position. For example, an operator could assign this responsibility to the “lead” flight attendant.

d. Screening. Each operator’s carry-on baggage program should clearly describe the procedures and personnel that will be used to prevent the boarding of baggage that, for any reason, cannot be properly stowed. The program should include the following elements:

- (1) Area of operation, including terminal and scanning point facilities, that will be used to determine whether baggage should be restricted from the aircraft.
- (2) Scanning point facilities and locations, including operations at facilities other than those owned, or ordinarily used, by the operator.
- (3) Personnel responsible for the scanning. The duties of personnel who are responsible for scanning should be clearly defined and manageable.
- (4) Procedures to prevent boarding of carry-on baggage that will exceed the placarded weight of the approved stowage areas, cargo bins, and “tie-down” areas.
- (5) Procedures to prevent the boarding of carry-on baggage that will exceed the number or size that is specified as a limit in the operator’s carry-on baggage program.
- (6) Procedures to prevent the boarding of carry-on baggage that will exceed the total space of the approved stowage areas available on an aircraft.

e. Information Provided to Passengers. Each operator should also have established procedures for informing travelers and travel agents about the specific carry-on requirements of each flight. Operators have the flexibility to accommodate travelers with special baggage problems, provided the baggage can be safely stowed. Operators should provide information to passengers about their procedures for accommodating special baggage prior to the flight. In addition, passengers should be provided with information about the types of materials that should not be carried in their carry-on baggage, such as hazardous materials.

f. Manuals. The operator should ensure that the appropriate parts of the crewmembers’ manual provides information about the operator’s approved carry-on baggage program. This should include: Proper methods of stowing carry-on baggage, cargo, and other articles carried in the cabin; handling of items that have been boarded and cannot be properly stowed; crew coordination necessary to ensure items are properly stowed; assignment of crewmember responsibility for verification; assignment of crewmember responsibility for ensuring that

carry-on baggage will not hinder the availability and use of emergency equipment; and other pertinent information that the principal operations inspector determines should be in the crewmembers' manual.

g. Training. Operators should provide training to appropriate ground personnel and to all crewmembers regarding the operator's approved program. The training should include, but is not limited to: Carry-on baggage limitations; baggage scanning; processing of carry-on baggage that cannot be accommodated in any of the passenger compartments; proper stowing of carry-on baggage; stowing of cargo and unusual items in the cabin; crew coordination; applicable passenger information; types of and limitations on, stowage provisions; verification that carry-on baggage is stowed so it does not interfere with emergency equipment; and the handling of carry-on baggage during an emergency.

h. Operators of aircraft that are required by 14 CFR part 119 to operate under part 135 must comply with the appropriate parts of part 135 when developing carry-on baggage procedures.

/s/

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